

# Head's Space

Term 5, 2019/2020



I hope that you and your family are well at this strange and difficult time.

I wanted to write a newsletter (even though there isn't much going on at school right now) because I feel it is important to let you know that we are still here, remotely, doing our bit. Many of our teachers (like everyone else) have the additional responsibilities of caring for their own children or elderly relatives; nevertheless, they are still setting work and sending/responding to emails to help support and guide the students. For more details, please refer to the attached document 'Advice on Home Learning'. This is a new version of what we have sent out before (it is also published on our website), but things are changing so fast at the moment that we do need to update it frequently. Please do take a look – in particular there is some information on programmes that the BBC is beginning to broadcast on Monday that are designed to help students to maintain their studies at home.

In school we have been open to a small group of children of key workers and it has been great. A merry band of teachers, who volunteered to run this, have made the experience educational, but fun, and I am pleased to say it has been very successful. We have worked hard to observe social distancing and to ensure that everyone who is here is as safe as can be under these extra-ordinary circumstances. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who have been involved in this.

On Friday 20 March when we closed (doesn't that seem a long time ago?) we were acutely aware of the fact that it was the unexpected last day for our Year 11 and Year 13 students and they were facing a void of uncertainty about their exams. We tried to make the day as special for them as possible and laid on a bit of a "do" for them. It was lovely to see how brave and sensible they were in a very difficult position. Since then we have been making sure that we remain up-to-date with the Government's plans and expectations for ensuring that all of these students will get the grades they deserve. Rest assured, we are on the case. We will be in regular contact with you regarding developments about exams and urge you to keep checking the latest news section on the school website where we will post updates from the Department for Education.

As you are probably aware, there has been much in the news about ensuring that those who are entitled are receiving support in the absence of free meals at school. Initially, before the Government organised their approach to this, we dealt with it by paying money directly into the bank accounts of the parents concerned. This week, we signed up to the Government's voucher scheme and those eligible should be receiving vouchers electronically. If you believe your son or daughter is entitled to Free School Meals and you have not received either of these things, please get in touch with Kirsty Collins (Raising Standards Leader, Pupil Premium) at the following email address: [kirsty.collins@sandwich-tech.kent.sch.uk](mailto:kirsty.collins@sandwich-tech.kent.sch.uk).

This crisis has shown, more than ever, how important it is to have electronic means of communication. I'm not sure how we all would have coped if this had happened 25 years ago! If any of you do not have email addresses, or have not told us your email addresses, I would urge you to set one up and let us know as soon as possible. If you would like some help with this, please get in touch.

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**HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD**

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You may have seen in the news that, inevitably, the Open Golf Tournament that was scheduled to take place in Sandwich this July has been postponed—it will be held in Sandwich next July (2021) instead. This is good news in terms of all the exciting opportunities and business it will bring to the area—particularly given the devastating effect that Covid-19 will have had on many local businesses—but, it also means that the terms dates for next year, which we had already published, need to change as both us and Sir Roger Manwood's School will have no choice but to close early again. We have worked particularly hard to minimise the changes that this will cause to the already published term dates as we know that many staff and parents may well have already booked holidays based on the published dates. The new dates for next year can be seen here: [Term Dates 2020/2021](#).

There is also much speculation in the media about schools reopening. We are monitoring this situation carefully and will let you know as soon as we know anything. In the meantime we will continue to observe the current guidelines—that is, the safest place for anyone to be right now is at home.

Yesterday and today I have had the great pleasure of sending approximately 150 emails to students who, teachers have told me, have been working particularly hard whilst at home. I'd love to send more! Please remember that we are setting lots of work because we want to be sure you have enough, but we are realistic and hope that you and your sons and daughters are not putting too much pressure on yourselves. You are parents, not teachers, and all you can do is encourage them to work hard, but to look after their (and your) wellbeing too. Regular breaks, exercise and keeping in touch with friends (remotely) is essential too. In these difficult times, all any of us can do is our best.

I, personally, am not religious, but I do believe in the power of optimism and positive thought. We must all take comfort where we can. My very best positive thoughts to you all. We are remote – but, I hope, united.

Tracey Savage  
Headteacher

P.S. To any of you who are working for the NHS: I am in awe of you – thank you.

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*Hold fast that which is good*

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# Advice on home learning

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We are advising parents to try and keep their children learning. The following guidelines may help you:

**Expectations:** We realise that keeping your children learning while in lockdown can be difficult. There is no expectation for parents/carers to become their teachers. There is plenty of work on our website, but it is for the pupils to select the work they are able to do. If they are stuck, they can email their teachers to ask for help. All the email addresses are listed under 'contacts' on our website homepage (top right-hand corner).

**Maintain a routine for your child;** set a schedule that follows the school timetable with breaks and lunchtime built in. But stay realistic – you cannot completely replicate the school experience at home - we can all only do our best in these difficult circumstances.

**Check our website for the resources** your child needs (go to: 'students & parents' then click on 'school closure resources') these home learning measures have been put in place so that you should only have to supervise. The pupils have been shown where they are and have been told to work through them over the coming weeks.

**If there is a booklet or something that looks like it needs filling in, students can of course hand write out their answers or create a separate word document. Items don't have to be printed.**

**Teachers** are available for work related queries by school email – all contact addresses are on our website. Your child is allowed to email their teacher for help. However, please remember that you may not get an instant response. But we will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.

**BBC lessons:** Apart from the work we have set, there are other sources of learning available for your children. The BBC is going to be running online lessons from Monday 20th April for children of all ages in many subjects. Use the following link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h>

From 20 April, you will be able to access regular daily lessons in English and Maths, as well as other core subjects, in an expanded version of the BBC Bitesize website and also on special programmes broadcast on BBC iPlayer and BBC Red Button.

Are lessons from home becoming stressful? Bitesize is expanding its content from 20 April to help you.

The content of these lessons will be backed up by videos, practice tests, educational games and articles. Regular lessons on other core subjects, including science, will also be available. They will also include advice for parents on how to help. Plus the BBC Bitesize website will have guides for pupils with SEN (special educational needs).

It will be known as **Bitesize Daily**.

## Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9

There are six different 20 minute shows, each designed to target a specific age group, from ages 5 to 14. Experts and teachers will be involved, covering what should be learned that day for the different year groups and key stages. Maths, Science and English will be covered in dedicated programmes, and other subjects such as History, Geography, Music and Art will also be covered.

## GCSE and A level

For older students, BBC Four is also joining forces with Red Button for evening programmes to support the GCSE and A Level curriculum.

**Form Tutor Contact:** This term, all pupils will be receiving a weekly email from their form tutor. The purpose of this is to just check in on them and find out how they are coping. They are welcome to answer the email, but they do not have to, it is their choice. Many tutors will be sending an optional general knowledge quiz with their email.

**Keep healthy;** ensure that physical activity does not become neglected. We have been advised that 500 school sport leaders will be working to provide daily online and digital resources to help keep children active during the schools shutdown. The activities, provided by Government-backed Sport England, the Youth Sports Trust and the School Games Organisers, will include fitness and personal challenges, problem-solving games and activities and online contests. Check their websites for details.

**Mental well-being is important;** encourage them to keep in regular contact with their friends over Skype, Zoom or phone. They should talk to their friends, not just text or WhatsApp.

**Mental Health support during lockdown:**

Pupils

<https://moodspark.org.uk>

A place where young people aged 10-16 can learn how to look after their emotional and mental health, and can find ways to help them bounce back when life gets tough.

<https://kooth.com>

This offers online support and counselling when young people are not feeling at their best.

At Kooth, young people can access an online magazine written by young people; they can contribute too. They can also join discussion boards, which are monitored continuously. Young people can set goals to help improve their lives. There is also a chat facility, where young people can access a counsellor 365 days a year. The counsellors are all trained.

Parents and Carers

<https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/parent-carers/>

This offers support, resources and advice for parents and carers on how to help their children become more resilient. It provides links when more specific help is needed.

**Reading is important;** encourage them to read a book for a period of every day. Our librarians have now added a library section to each year group area on the school closure resources. This document contains a list of online resources to support your child in their reading, and engagement with stories, at home. If you have any questions about anything on this list, or would like some more support in facilitating reading at home, please email: [librarian@sandwich-tech.kent.sch.uk](mailto:librarian@sandwich-tech.kent.sch.uk)

**Audiobooks for free;** [www.audible.co.uk](http://www.audible.co.uk), has announced it is making hundreds of titles available for free for as long as schools remain closed during the Covid-19 crisis. This is particularly useful for reluctant readers or those who are dyslexic.

## Additional Resources

Here are some additional resources that may be useful:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/secondary/zkqp47h>

This is a huge resource of educational programmes covering a wide range of subjects for secondary aged students, up to and including GCSE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

This has many revision/learning notes alongside activities and exercise to aid learning in all secondary subjects up to and including GCSE

The BBC are also intending to use the 'red button' and 'iplayer' to show other educational programmes. Please do keep an eye on this.

Books. Please encourage your sons and daughters to read every day. If you do not have many books at home, there are many classics that are available to download as e-reader books, or audible books for free from amazon:

<https://www.audible.co.uk/>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-store-ebooks-newspapers-blogs/b?node=341677031>

Reading a quality newspaper everyday (this can also be done via the above website) is also a good idea.

<https://www.senecalearning.com/>

This is a free resource for students which cover most subjects and exam boards up to and including A-Level. Therefore this is particularly useful for Years 12 & 13.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>

This site has numerous free online course that are designed to give a taste into undergraduate (degree level) learning. This is an excellent resource for Y13 in preparation for University, and for Y12s and 11 in helping them to think about University.

<https://www.thebodycoach.com/blog/pe-with-joe-1254.html>

Joe Wicks is leading a live 30 minute physical work out via youtube every week day. This would be a good thing for the students to do on a regular basis.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

This page has some good tips and advice about looking after our mental health at the difficult time.